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1917

In the Name of Love

by

Mildred Criss McGuckin





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Criss, Mildred

IN THE NAME OF LOVE

BY
MILDRED CRISS MCGUCKIN



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To

MY FATHER

WHOSE COURAGE FILLED MY LIFE WITH LOVE

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I

In the Sunlight

I

BEAUMARIS

At Beaumaris,
The low moon's like an orange lantern burning
 golden fire
That falls in waving shafts of light across the
 Straits;
All Anglesea
Is painted lavender and rose; deep twilight wakes
 desire
Within the blood; each evening star illuminates
Love's eyes,
At Beaumaris.

At Beaumaris
On Anglesea, I and my shadow wander 'cross the
 lawn
Alone, counting the useless imprints of our feet;
All Anglesea
Is made for love and lovers with their dreams of
 life unborn;
I cannot bear the salt-scent, or the deep sea-
 beat:
I go
From Beaumaris.

From Anglesea

I seek the heather-hills of Wales, and build in
Beddgelert

A little house of crumbling stone to hide my
age;

And Beaumaris

Will live for me in dreams of love until my last
sunset

Turns gray: one star o'er Snowdon in my heri-
tage

To Beaumaris

On Anglesea.

THE RUSTIC

THEY never stop! Those half-mad motorists,
that run
Through countryside, by-lane, and hill. Speed-
ing
From cities reeking with their toil, they miss the
sun,
Mist-veiled across the low-lands. Still heed-
ing
Naught, they miss shadow-clouds blowing across
the hill.
They never stop to heed the stars. They miss
the song
Of sleepy birds calling their mates. Their
lights
Flash on, on, ever on, like drunken eyes that
long
For rest. Their throbbing motors drown the
night's
Song of the woodland brook and drowsy whip-
poor-will;
They miss the blackish blue of silent pools that
lie

Shadowed and rippled by the willow's edge;
They're blind to feather clouds that breast an
opal sky,

Or silken meadow grass, and mossy ledge
Where agèd turtles basque, and air their rounded
shells.

And heedless of all living save themselves, they
speed

On past my garden hedge, their cruel wheels
Crush down my animals, leaving them there to
bleed,

Indiff'rent to their lives, or how it feels!

God grant that they, these puny great men, find
their hells.

I, just a stupid farmer, sleeping out my years
Of solitude, know more of life than they;
I have been nearer God, tasted his smiles and
tears,

And known the majesty of Faith. The day
And night, all varying, are given men to spend
Close to the heart of things; alive to each
appeal

That comes from scented rose or rarer flower,
Responding to the touch, the looks of love that
steal

From creatures less intelligent, whose power
Is hindered by the lack of speech. So to the end,

I will find far more meaning in the scheme of
things
Than they who hurry past not heeding life,
Or knowing half the lasting joy that stillness
brings,
The beauty of love children. See my wife
With love all through the years aglow in her dear
eyes,
No sad estrangement, born of crowded days,
Has marred our happiness. And as I see
The revelers pass by in haste, so strange their
ways,
I wonder what they seek, what destiny.
Have they so much who all life's little things
despise?

A NEW DAY

SEE o'er the wine-red sunrise, star-light is fading
 'way;

Amethyst mists are drifting, drifting out to
 the sea;

Hear through the dune grass swaying, morning
 winds greet the day,

Fragrant their breath from night dews' linger-
 ing witchery.

Feel in the warm light creeping softly across the
 lawn,

Life to a world of creatures rising from out
 their sleep:

Whisper in prayer "Good morning," unto an-
 other dawn;

Go to the merry, laughing; stop with the sad
 to weep.

DAWN

THE moon is lost in the mist of morn;
The stars are falling to sleep;
Salt-laden winds in the cool gray dawn
Are wafted ashore from the deep;
Life-dreams are born to vanish and die
As the sun casts a diamond-path o'er the sea;
Pearl tinted vapours awake in the sky
With shadows of dreams to be.

SUNSET

STILL seas; gray shadows drifting from the land;
Long lines of dead waves foaming on the sand;
A greenish swell rolls in, outlined against the
spray,

And on the sky-line, just one sail drifting away
To banks of fog that move in from the East:
Low dunes reflect the rose of sunset skies;
The sands turn burnished gold, lavender lies
Beneath the crests of curling waves. The sand-
snipes trace

Their tiny footprints, curving, twisting like fine
lace,

Back to their nests on salted bugs to feast.

The dying wind drops down beyond the sun;

Silence o'er all; a sense of all things done

Comes with the waking stars. Long paths of
warm gold light

Fade from the glowing sky, and stealthily the
night

Wraps in its mantle weary man and beast.

FROM A TRAIN

FIELDS of green, dotted with yellow mustard
flower,
High banks lined with clinging fern,
Bogs, and half-burned woodlands, farms that
nestle in a
Clearing, brackish bays that turn
Lazily throughout the marshlands, sandy
stretches
Bare except for stunted pines,
Now a wheat field's feather surface, now a
swamp of
Tangled roots, and wild fruit vines,
Then a cloud of smoke that blurs the landscape,
then a
Whistle's shriek, that dulls the grind
Of steel wheels on the track, no sound from the
outside
Country racing on behind—
Now a pine-tree thicket carpeted with mosses,
Now a long straight roadway
Stretching to a patch of bright sky, o'er the
quiet

From a Train

Blue-gray water of a bay,
Now a town with weather-beaten roofs and
 ugly
Yards clustered in the sun,
Then a fog, and through the whiteness, wires and
 poles all
Run a race that's never won.
Endless grind, and grind, and grind of wheels,
 endless smoke,
Endless passing out of sight,
Now the dusk, the round sun sinking in a cloud-
 less
Sky that quickly turns to night,
Now the tunnel's blackness, many shuffling feet
 that
Seek impatiently the
Passageway, men and women, children, porters,
Pushing, talking, nervously;
Motionless the train stands panting. Strange
 white faces
Hurry by in eagerness.
One in all the crowd is coming to me—now his
Voice, his hands, and his caress!

LAC LEMAN

OPAL clouds o'er narrow sands
Sink in a copper sea;
Mem'ries rise in mountain mists
Drifting to ecstasy;
Great night draws the sea and sky
Folding their souls as one;
Love to love! God to man!
Life's perfect rule be done.

OUT OF THE FAR-WAY

DREAMS in a drifting mist, a voice in the sunset
breeze,
Peace in the dim-veiled mountain peaks falls
o'er the restless trees;
Diamond-tipped, the crescent moon breaks
through a fading cloud;
Eyes of the evening wake, o'er day in an opal
shroud;
Night touches the silent lips of day; the power
of unseen hands
Summons the dying soul of love to realms of far-
away lands.

SYMPHONY

DROWSY glades and somber shades echo the
laughing pines;

Fairy tones and falling cones rustle the ivy
vines.

All the woods are deep in a noon-day sleep
And the tree-trunks molding lie;

The myrtles are hiding down by the side
Of the willow trees that sigh.

Cool winds stir the silver fir, waving their crests
on high;

Early June brings forth her moon to ride an
amber sky;

Then the soft dusk falls and the young owl
calls

To the will-o'-the-wisps that fly,
And the shadows meet at their dancing feet
As the sprightly elves run by.

Fairies sweet on mosses meet where jewel dew
have lain—

Incense land—none understand if they know
not pain:

And the mystery of our ecstasy
Springs up from the dampened earth,
While the woodlands deep, in their dreamless
 sleep
Are whispering songs of mirth.

ON THE MOUNTAIN

THE frozen cataract's white fangs of crystalline
Sparkle beneath the sun against the crested
evergreen;

The jagged rocks lay bare their icy pinnacles
Under a vault of blue and white, that draws the
frost unseen

From lowland towns that slumber still and
mountainous ravine.

The silent hills stretch out like waves of stone;
the snow-

Capped mountain peaks shadow the valleys
through the mist, and go

Behind the drifting clouds of fire and gold
that race

Across the waking sky. Then rise, man, from
your sleep and show

Dawn as a vision of Heaven, unto the world
below.

OCTOBER

SKIES so blue they lend their color to the frosted
world below,
Tinting shadows azure, purple; thridding clouds
like banks of snow;
Frosty nights of stars at arms' length, dawns of
fire and then the glow
Of Indian Summer dawning skies:

Whiffs of apple, dead leaves burning, blow
around the chimney grate,
Arbor grapevines laden purple, bend above a
rustic gate;
Colors riot through the asters and the sunbeams
delicate
Kiss Indian Summer butterflies.

Dying corn-shucks stacked like soldiers hold
their stately russet line;
Leaf on leaf in scarlet, amber, falls from off the
ivy vine;
Drop by drop the blood falls slowly from this
dying heart of mine—
Love's Indian Summer sacrifice.

II

In the Moonlight

GREATER THAN ALL ELSE

DEAR little hand about my finger tips,
How could I know before you came
How much a part of love you are? Dear lips
Warm on my breast, am I to blame
Because I could not know thee as thou art?
Eyes like the twilight stars, look up at me
Innocently yet strangely wise.
Surely a part of God's great mystery
Beats in thy heart. I close my eyes
In pain, so great this new love in my heart.

TO HEAR YOU LAUGH

I'VE traveled 'cross the night; the fireflies lit the
way

Among the shadowed leaves;
The highroad dust is on my feet; my lips
Are parched for water, yet I wait to hear you
say

One happy word; I spend
The starlight to the end;
I've come to hear you laugh.

I cannot ask you if your days are filled with
song,

Yet I must know no pain
Is lurking in your eyes while I stand by
In idleness, afraid of circumstance. I long
To know that tenderness
Falls in your least caress;
I've come to hear you laugh.

As silently as darkness o'er an evening cloud
I come to you, my heart

To Hear You Laugh

23

On fire. I crush the heart-song on my lips
And stand here mute, afraid to speak aloud
Lest I should cause you pain:
Love, I am here again;
I've come to hear you laugh.

THY CALL

FROM dreams that brush my tired eyes, with
 mists of loveliness
And fragrance from a wealth of wild-wood flowers
 newly blown,
Into the velvet blackness of the night's deep
 wilderness
I journey forth and mock the rolling thunder
 clouds alone,
Because you call to me.

From Life that shines on me in copper-colored
 radiance
I turn aside, knowing no other light than love,
 no creed
But thy desire; I come, then, slave to thy first
 word's utterance
And lay immortal love beneath thy feet, knowing
 the need
Thou hast of me to call.

In Death I rise again from out vast solitude
To follow thee in shadow form, holding thee
 close to me

To lead thee back at length to God's great
sanctitude;
Soul bare to soul, and one at last throughout
Infinity,
Because you call to me.

THE LETTER

At last your letter comes, and with its coming,
all the throbbing pain
That lies within a joy too deep for smiles alone:
Cold little words they seem, and yet your voice
and laughter once again
Echoes within my heart. There's something in
the tone
Of what you say that hints of such control that
I grow sad
And wonder if you dare not say what's in your
heart.
I love you all the more for such consideration,
dear, and had
I strength myself would crush mine own thoughts
ere they start
To hurt you in my answer. Yet there's just
the chance that you may care to have me say
all that I feel—
I see your eyes, then, in the silent pathway of
the stars at night,
And hear your voice at dawning when I wake
from sleep;

I cherish ev'ry memory we hold in common,
 lest the light
Of ev'ry day existence turn them gray. I keep
The last touch of your hand a thing apart; the
 warmth of your caress
Still brings the warm blood to my face, and still
 the ache
I felt on leaving you burns in my throat, and all
 your tenderness
Lives in my mind. And sometimes all my
 strength could break
From longing for your touch again, your voice,
 your laughter, and your eyes;
But over us the star of love burns vividly—
Our star—God put it there to light us on our
 road of sacrifice,
And it shall burn for us throughout Eternity.
So now good-night, Dearheart, look once and
 find the star that burns for us, and then
 with me to God, just kneel.

A LOVER'S SONG

THE wish of the rose is the sun;
And meadow grass longs for the dew;
A weary moon calls for the dawn,
But my call, Dearheart, is for you.

The sandy beach longs for the sea;
The cry of the sea is for rest;
And fog-banks are calling the wind,
But I call you close to my breast.

Snow mountain tops long for the sky,
And valleys are sick for the rain;
A song-sparrow cries for its mate,
And I cry to see you again.

The long summer days want evening,
And nights want their silences deep;
The stars long to hold up the sky,
But I long to hold you in sleep.

WHITE ONE

You are fever on my lips, drying all my blood.
'Til I'm parched with thirst for you, White One
of the night;
You are pain within my throat, aching, burning
there,
'Til the thought of death grows sweet, White
One of delight:
You are pale, and cool, and still, lying in my
arms;
You are warm, and red, and gay, laughing at the
dawn;
At your touch I am a man, filled with youth and
life,
But my heart is old and torn after you have
gone:
You are fire within my breast, scalding all my
veins;
You are waters cool and deep drawing all my
strength;
You are weakness, you are strength, White
One, you are love;
You have made me what I am, make me yours
at length.

TOGETHER INTO LIFE

HUSH!

The thrush

Is calling to its mate;

Night is setting sail its star-filled ships;

Love!

Above

The dark is falling late;

Fill me with the fragrance of your lips;

Let me forget the drumming of the world's cold
song.

Pale!

The frail

White rose is drooping now,

Sick from breathing its own loveliness:

Thrill

And still

The aching in my brow;

Touch me with the fire of your caress;

Show me the love that aches to live this long
night through.

Wake!

And make

Our love a thing apart;
Mingle your soft breath with mine to-night;
Sleep!
And weep
A little then, Sweetheart;
Realization brings more than delight,
Leading the way from adolescence into life:
Trust!
Adjust
Your scheme of life to mine;
I will keep you all in all to me,
Care,
And share
My blood with yours like wine,
To keep our married love an ecstasy
I, as a lover will adore just you, my wife.

THE SINGER

WHAT if you bar your gates, I know the way to a
pool where I may see

Your eyes within the bright reflection of the
sky;

What if you chose a stranger in your wanderings,
if it makes you glad

I'll go then, singing o'er the road for passers-
by.

What if the waning night lingers too long, I will
wait in your garden

Beside the blossoms of the heliotrope that
bend

With their own weight, calling your name in
prayers that are stifled with my pain,

But morn shall find me singing at the long
road's end.

What if you should not return but go on your
way with another,

I should not cry your name to emptiness, but
crush

All of the rose's fragrance close to my frozen lips,
 mingling my song
Throughout the summer with the long notes of
 the thrush.

Though I die in pain if you find your happiness
 my songs rejoice;
But night finds me longing for the dreams that
 go
Back to the touch of your hands holding me
 through the night: but day by day
The highroad is wearying for singers, I must
 go.

SUPPLICATION

COME back and touch me ere the pain
Of loving thee is gone;
All my intensity is vain
Without thy laugh, thy song—
I stagnate with the commonplace
Dreading to wake alone,
For I have known just thine embrace,
Never an overtone;
Dearheart, is not the sacrifice
Too dear? Give me thy hand;
Caress the fever from mine eyes
And silent, understand.

AN APPEAL

ONE look into my eyes, and I would understand,

Ah why begrudge me this?

Dearheart, I cannot ask the pressure of your hand,

Your spoken word, or kiss,

But just to know from you the truth—let it be now, then go

Your busy way with men;

Leave me to understand alone, knowing I know,

What matter silence then?

Or is it pride that makes you bar your heart to me,

Feeling the wall between

Us as you do? Look back, dear, at the past and see

Just love. 'Twas nothing mean

That made me leave your side. I loved you, dear, but you

Impassive, let me go

Beyond your call, create my interests anew.

And you?—How could I know?

And now that all is past, I long to know from
thee

The truth. Surely no stain
Would fall on your white honor just to let me
see;

Is not your silence vain?
Take down the barriers that stand before our
feet

Just once; then pay the price
Of knowing all. Together let us meet
A common sacrifice.

ONCE THINE

Look back, Dearheart, into the memory we hold
as one,

And feel a warm breath trembling close to thee
for day is done.

Forget the long road winding far apart for thee
and me,

Lay bare thy soul, thy heart, just once to me
in secrecy.

For life would cheat us, dear, of all its best, that
precious spark

Of love. Once thine, then welcome all the
rest of pain and dark.

HOW LONG?

BEYOND the walls of time that crumbling fall
Will you be there in case we meet to call
My name, and claim me thine from out the
past?

Such vital love as yours, dear, can it last?

How long across the barriers of space,
Strange customs, languages, and distant place,
Can you hold sacred promises long made?
The darkness falls, dear, I'm alone, afraid.

Afraid lest time may rob us of the truth,
And substitute for love just beauty, youth;
Unnatural loneliness presents a test
That all may fall beneath, even the best.

I would forgive ourselves playing the game;
Forgetting for the moment, if the same
Deep overwhelming love could live on through
The ev'ry days of life. Can it for you?

Look back, Dearheart, and feel our love again,
Poignant with hope, and sweet even to pain;

The glow of dusk and firelight's on my face;
I tremble 'neath your eyes and your embrace.

Each day that passes leaves a scar of pain,
And on the thread of life an aching strain
Too great. Is it not so with you? Shall we
Face years of this, cold but for memory.

Or shall we crush out all that hurts and then
Leave love to rot, taking our place with men
As actors, bowing on the stage of fame?
For me it is enough to love thy name.

With you it may be diff'rent, in your hand
Is strength to govern men. I understand;
Accept all life, Dearheart; my lips are sealed;
Mine eyes are closed to futures unrevealed.

YOU

You, who would have none of me, know that
your laugh has echoed through each garden
that I knew;

You, who turned away from me, know that your
voice has prayed for me each time I tasted
grief:

You, who turned your eyes like steel to mine in
tears, I love the pain that you have given
me:

You, who have wrung the faith in God from out
my soul and left me wandering, I love
you:

You, who live your life in joy while I must die in
grief, burn but one candle on my bier.

ONE LAST WORD

I CANNOT see thy face, Dearheart; the fire is
low;

Put on another log. 'Tis scarcely dawn,
And this our last night here together. When
you go,

Go with a laugh upon your lips, the morn
Gilding the skies. But now, one moment more
or less

What harm? It must be for all time we part.
Our solemn word is given others. This caress
Must be the last. See how the shadows dart
And fate, frightened because they know the dawn
is due.

Ah! love, look up at me! To suffer there
Prostrate before the fire is madness. Surely
you

And I have known great love. 'Tis only fair
For us to pay our price. We are not cowards—
we

Who dared so much in life. No! Morning
breaks!

One Last Word

I hear the rattling carts. Let's laugh in memory
Of what was ours. We made our mad mis-
takes

And lost; but now all that is past. At last we
know

Our better selves. See! I am smiling, love,
Stand up and face the dawn. Just hold me!
There! Now go!

WHEN

October.

GOLDENROD with asters swaying, russet, purple
in the field;
Woods all flecked with amber, crimson, autumn
touched and autumn sealed;
Meeting, would the spell of mem'ries draw you
to me? Would you yield?

January.

Stiff, stark branches black and frozen 'gainst a
dreary winter sky;
Frosted roads long, bleak, and empty, lead from
cold to cold and lie
Naked to the blowing snowdrifts. Meeting,
would you pass me by?

May.

Orchards glowing rose-pink, fragrant bending
over velvet green
Meadow grass, where dogwood whitens 'gainst
a sky aquamarine;
Meeting when the world is waking, would old
shadows come between?

August.

Sands salt-scented fade away to heat mirages,
and the sea
Shadowed amethyst and silver, foams a little
playfully;
Meeting there, the world forgotten, would you
give your love to me?

III

In the Firelight

AT THE END A MEETING

As I sit before the hearthstone, watching em-
bers turning gray,
Underneath the blue and red flames dancing
Time and place both fade away.
And my chiffon peignoir glimmers in the flick'-
ring shadow light;
Heliotrope and columbine so fragrant,
Clustered in a tight bouquet,
Press their cool cheeks on my hot throat, bidding
memories awake.

Now beside a brook I wander in the
Woodlands; now I hesitate,
Listening to a whistle in the distance. Now I
laugh and run,
Arms outstretched, to greet him, partner in
youth's
Sweet romance. Then a small snake,
Sprawling near us in our pathway, starts and
glides off aimlessly.
How we laughed and watched his brown and
yellow
Markings blend into a tree.

Hand in hand, the warm blood racing through
our veins, we ran and ran
Through the ferns and o'er the pine-cones to a
Lily pool, where secretly
We swam, splashing in and out the deep cool
water, laughing too,
When the ooze sucked at our feet and held us
Prisoners, 'til we'd rescue
One another. Then exhausted, sleepy, we would
bask awhile
On the sun-kissed mosses, telling stories,
Dreaming dreams that must come true.

Now the shadows deepen, mists before my eyes
have blurred my dream.
Chill the room too, from the fog-wind blowing
'Cross the marshlands; now a gleam
From a falling log relights the vision.

Standing on a dock,
Crowded now with loved-ones, watching as the
Steamer gathers strength to steam
Silently away; within my throat an ache that
burns and tears
All strength from my heart: he goes; and, with
his
Going, youth for evermore

Dies within my heart. He takes another with
him. White and cold
I turn away, facing pain that knows no
Cure save Death's starless stream, or
Time's slow, pitiless relief.—The days and weeks,
all colorless
Pass by, bringing no explanation, no
Word of him, and my distress,
Turning into bitterness, leaves me devoid of
every wish
Save one—seeing, with my eyes awakened,
Life's cold world of ugliness.

Shutters creak about my cottage; rafters moan
so dolefully
In the wind, that half-afraid I listen
Tense in vague expectancy.
Then to see the doors and windows barred, and
put another log
On the altar of my dreams.

I see now

Little faces eagerly
Looking into mine with laughing starlike eyes;
then baby hands
Reaching to me, begging me to take them,
Yet they cannot understand;

Babies all who have no home, no mother-love;
willingly I'd
Die to call them mine, yet I can but play each
Day with them in wonderland.
Knowing them I learn to love anew, but with a
love grown old.
Seeing their loneliness makes my sorrow,
Like a dampened flame, grow cold.
Laughing, yes, and happy in my work among the
poor, I lay
Grief aside as wicked. Real life offers
Us such problems to unfold,
Why waste time in useless longing for a dream
that might have been.

Now that I am old and useless with no
Part to play in man's routine,
I may dream my dreams at evening in the em-
bers' dancing light;
Dream my dreams and let my heart break in
the
Darkness here alone, unseen.

How the wind blows! How the dampness creeps
in through the crevasses!
Hear the dead waves in the distance sounding
Never ending restlessness!

Somewhere from the depths, white hands reach
starward; somewhere voices call;
I can see them—hear them, and my soul in
Death seeks their unhappiness.

Someone knocks!—Surely 'tis no one!—yet I hear
them at the door,
Knocking, knocking rapidly. I'll see then
Who it is. But no, before
I go I will straighten out my laces, brush away
my tears.

Wait then! I am coming. See, I turn the
Key. No doubt 'tis some footsore
Traveler. But no! The door swings open.—
Oh my God! 'Tis he!

He who stands here, arms outstretched to take
me,

Hold me, silent, tenderly—
Love's too strong and I'm too weak now.
Depths are calling! I must go!

Even his strong arms can't keep me. Death is
Calling, calling me to sea.

“No, no words, just kiss me, kiss me. In your
arms, dear, let me cry.
All's forgotten—all's forgiven. Hold me—hold
me—let me die.”

THE LAST DREAM

(Of Childhood)

ONCE more to pass the rustic gate, once more
To seek the meadows hidden by the hedge,
And rest in the ragged field of goldenrod
And scrubby pine-trees marshaled in a line
Guarding the stillness of a happy world.
Where every day together you and I
Built iridescent castles in our dreams.

(Of Adolescence)

Blue Heaven rippled by a thousand clouds;
Stillness, and sparkling mountain air, and all
The valleys outlined purple 'gainst the hills;
Once more to touch you, hold you, listen to
your
Voice echoed on the cliff across the lake,
And wander homeward to the little freshly
Painted town where fragrant wood-smoke curls
from
Out the red brick chimney tops as evening
Falls. Once again with you beneath the hills

Alone, while the clear-eyed stars watch over us
And light the long still evenings that we spend
Each heart to each, brave in our untried faith.

(Of Full Life)

Once more the hot breath of the city streets,
Stifling the little sufferers as they lie
Wide-eyed and pale, the nervous crowds seek out
Their destinations, weary at the close
Of day, and I, I wander listlessly,
Waiting your departure that I and my pain
May seek oblivion in the tangle of
Men's lives unknown to you.—You pass, and in
The flicker of the street lamp I can see
Your eyes smiling into his. Now in the night's
Hot stillness I am there again beside
A wharf as the smooth water glides by at my
feet;
Deep night and the rain, and a dawn that holds
part
Of all the darkness of the night, and you,
You are gone.—

(Of Old Age)

Firelight thrids the dusk; my lamp
Is flick'ing in a breath of wind that brings

The voices of your children to my ear. They
Are coming to my door to beg me tell
Stories. Once again I hear their laughter as
They cluster round me. Once again I see
Your eyes in theirs, and hear your voice ringing
in

Their own. I kiss and send them back to you,
Warmed by the imprint of their little hands,
And warm within my heart because they love
Me too.

In my room all the blinds are drawn; I
Am waiting for the night to bring me rest.
And you, are you tired too? Soon you will
come

And lay your hand in mine.—Beyond the sea,
The white line of the sky is clear; I know
That you will come, for I have waited long.

AN OLD MAN'S SONG

OH! little singing bird, the song within thy
throat

Is tuned to wake the violets; each trembling
note

Bids frightened butterflies spread out their
gauzy wings

And seek the sun. There is no messenger that
sings

Of Spring as thee. Sing on of love for I am
old.

Oh! little singing bird, I call thee Chickadee

Because thy merry voice is as a child's to me;

Sing on thy laughing summer song; the fall is
nigh,

And soon, my singing bird, both you and I shall
die;

Sing on of love, my Chickadee, for I am old.

IN THE SOUTH WIND

I stood within a garden of noonday shadows
 deep,
Where lotus buds were drooping in winds that
 whispered sleep;
The sands were flecked with silver by pools
 aquamarine,
And ivy vines entwining caressed the mosses
 green;
The south wind in the hedges murmured in
 undertone
To leave the lighted highway and live for love
 alone.

THE LOST PRAYER

THE lost prayer of a soul is spent
On voiceless winds that sweep
From barren heights past man's ascent,
And swaying forests deep,
To valleys dim in meadow mists
And citied lands of toil,
Cross opal sands that lie wave-kissed—
An ocean's naked spoil—
Beyond, as midnight sea and earth
Are lost in mystery,
Dream-children of a soul have birth
In solemn harmony.

TO A CIGARETTE

SLIM white enchantress,
With fiery eye,
Frail tissue temptress,
Thy lovers would die
Craving thee, braving
Thee, even as I.

See how I press thee
And play with thee yet;
Loving, caress thee
My own paper pet;
Slender and tender
Countess Cigarette.

Dangerous Darling,
The touch of thy tips
Keeps me from starving;
There, close to my lips
Thrill me and still me
With opiate sips.

To a Cigarette

59

Gypsy Godiva,
All white save thine eye;
Dearest Deceiver,
Thy lovers would die
Kissing thee, missing
Thee, even as I.

MASQUES

A SKETCH

Time—Moonlight.

Scene—On a Terrace.

Characters—HE

SHE

OTHERS

(Six or eight masqued couples, in fancy dress, are waltzing to and fro across the terrace. Moonlight and shadows fall across them. The strains of a waltz drift through the trees. The music ceases.)

The Host. Ladies and gentlemen, I beg you
cease

This modern dance; the moonlight is
too bright,

Come, let us dream awhile of old
romance,

And choose our partners for a minuet.

(Laughter amongst the group, as the partners are chosen, but another is before Him, and draws

Her away. The minuet music starts and the dance begins. Towards the close of the minuet, He steps on Her dress, tearing the lace. The dance ceases and the others draw away into the shadows.)

He Canst thou forgive me? See I have
 torn thy dress
 So misty white and cloud-like that I
 fain
 Would weave the silken tissue back
 again
 And have thee smile thy pardon down
 on me.

She Hearing thee speak such words of
 penitence
 Is worth far more than laces. Do I
 know
 Thee? Are we but strangers here,
 meeting by chance
 Behind two masques, and is the thrill
 I feel
 On hearing thy voice but the spell of
 the night?

He Dear Lady, whiter than the whitest
 star,

Masques

Something's familiar in thy loveliness,
And yet I cannot call thy name.
Can there
Be madness in the wanton wind,
lighting
A spark of love between us suddenly?
Here in the shadowlight, come dream
with me
Of night that whispers secrets man
should know.

She Promise thou wilt not lift the
 masque from off
My face, and I will stay. No one
 must know
Me for I am not free to touch thy
 hand.
Yet for one moment more or less,
 what harm?
Promise thou wilt not lift the masque
 from off
My face.

He And I am no more free than thou,
Neither shall know the other, yet the
 woods

Shall know us both and keep our
secret deep
Within its shade.

She Shadowed by fir-trees sighing, softly,
 we
Will wander hand in hand apart
From life and the insincere laughter
 of men.
We'll dance o'er jewel moonbeam
 paths,
Winding through scented groves
 where lotus lie
On rippling ponds; we'll sip the
 night-
Mist from the brook, and count each
 icy star
That melts within the flames of
 dawn.
Dreaming to-night will make the
 morrow sweet;
No day can make us e'er regret
This magic hour.

He Love at thy call I am here.
My heart awakens from stagnant
 sleep

Masques

Hearing thee speak, and elves are
dancing through

My blood; my youth has come again
Poignant with love's intensity. Love

I

Must touch thee e're the ache within
my throat

Crushes my breath.

She Masque, thou art mad with the
 moon

That falls in veils of misty light
About our eyes—

He Yes, and 'tis thee whom I love!

She Touch not my lips, but rather lay
 thy cool

(Music from below the terrace.)

Hand on my cheek. Fever and
lightning dart through

My veins, and I am trembling here to
be

Within thine arms. (*Goes to him.*)
Dance with me! Moments like
these

Are dearer than Eternity. Passion's

Exquisite flower pours out her fragrance

Before us. Come!—Into the moonlight! Dance!

(They dance away to a Bohemian melody. At the end of the dance she falls exhausted, he bends over her and lifts her in his arms. The night turns gray; the dawn breaks amber and rose.)

He Look to the East! A flame of red
 burns all
The sky. The pale stars trembling,
 fade, and morn,
Waking the world from dreams of
 ecstasy,
Will part us all too soon.

She A moment now
Beside thee; then into the empty light
 of
Day, I into a home where love has
 died
Leaving just ashen memories to
 wake
In silent shadows. Every day and
 night

Masques

Spends its unthinking hours in
commonplace

Reality. I do not dare to dream

Fearing the pain that would arise on
thoughts

Of tenderness. Yet I am starved for
love.

He E'en so within my home. I too am
starved;

Unthinking she and I have drifted on
'til

I, who am her husband, know her
least of all

The world.

She How strange that men should suffer
so,

Dying perhaps, rather than voice
their heartache,

Or beg one touch, one look to kindle
love.

So it will be until the hungry meet
Each other, just as we have done,
strangers

Seeking we know not what, but satis-
fied

To glow beneath each others' touch
awhile.

He Morning has climbed from under-
 neath the world
And the blue sky from the folds of
 night;
So you have drawn my soul to you.
 Just with
Your fragrant hands you've swept
 away the dust
From Life's highway; now as I go my
 way
Perhaps I'll look at men and smile
 once more. Who knows?

She Touch me again that I may take a
 spark
Of this new love away with me.
 Crush me
That I may wake to-morrow hurting
 from
The force of thine embrace. I've
 starved so long.

He Promise you will not let the memory
Of me, a masquer, make you sad.

Masques

Think of my love as hovering by
you.

In every moment that you seem
alone

Feel my voice whispering, "I love
you." In

The night-time when you long to
hear a voice

Singing to you of love, for silently
I follow in each path-way that you
go,

Counting the dust from off thy feet
as gold.

No night shall pass but that I bend
my knees

Before you, lest thou suffer loneliness;
No day but that I beg thee let me
serve.

Give me thy last caress in promise
that

Thou wilt not grieve!

She

Speak not of parting yet,
Morning has scarcely stirred the
sleeping birds

With its soft wind. The shadows
dart and fade,

Frightened because they know the
 morn is here.
 But thou art not as cowardly as
 they,
 Stay with me but a moment more,
 this night
 Has been a dream, an intermission
 of
 Life's dull routine. You do not know
 my name;
 I would not have you know, more
 beautiful
 This madness as it is. Give me thy
 hand!

He

Think'st thou I do not know thy
 name? I know
 It well. All night the stars have
 spelled it out
 In stones of fire across the sky: the
 wind
 Whispered thy secret to me e're thou
 laid
 Thy hand in mine. I knew thee
 when thou ran
 Laughing and smiling 'cross the ball-
 room floor.

She Who am I then?

He First promise that thou wilt
 Not retract this love thou hast given
 me!

(She goes to him and kisses him; He takes her in his arms and holds her to him, pushing her at arm's length he exclaims—)

Thou art my wife! And I adore thee!

(Embrace each other.)

CURTAIN

IV

In the Dark

AFTER ALL

MADNESS, a voice half prayer, half song,
 Passion, an empty gain of hands, lips, eyes;
Awakening, a price, a long
 Road winding on to sacrifice,
And then regret—
But yet,
Can this be Love?

A row of shadow shapes throughout
 The fog passing in silence one by one,
A wisp of light, a laugh, a doubt,
 A pile of ashes in the sun
Smoulders regret;
And yet,
Can this be Life?

ANOTHER STAR

TALL white candles burning on a snow-white
altar piece,
Over the Cross a golden shaft of sunlight
falls;
Silence, rows of wide-eyed little boys, whose
whispers cease
When, from the vaulted depths, an organ's
thunder calls
Echoes of God to earth.

Kneeling here, his small white hands enclasped,
his eyes shut tight,
A child whispers a prayer; "Oh, give her back
to me,
Dear God, or let me go to her." An acolite
Puts out each candle, bowing low. Then
silently
The people turn to go.

Gold and rose light mingle with the dusk; night
and its shadows start
To wrap the world in folds of gray close to their
breast.

“Little boy who prayed so for thy mother’s
touch, God saw thy heart
And took thee up into her arms again. So
rest.

Another star is born.”

MASTER ONE

NEW leaves that lie unborn throughout the frost
 open their fragrant lips to taste the sun;
The hollow stillness of the cloudless night is
 guarded by the wakeful stars that gaze
Into the fathomless abyss that hangs above the
 world; and Thou, Great Silent One,
Rekindles warmth within the branches of the
 trees, making the sap like foaming wine
Run to the smallest feather tip that rides the
 sunny air. The grass sips in the dew
And carpets all the fields with green. The dusty
 earth sends forth its weeds to feed the
 birds
Who mate and breed their young. The winter
 skies of gray grow old and dying, leave
 the blue
And white of summer as a canopy of light above
 the earth. It is Thy will
To lengthen shadows as the day blends fire-lit
 sunsets with the purple of the night;
It is Thy voice that sounds in thunder clouds,
 Thine eyes that look on us in lightning as

We tremble at what seems Thy pitiless rebuke,
yet weakest wild-wood buds invite
The violence of storms, knowing far more than
we, who cannot see beyond the length
Of our own shadows on the road. Nature and
Thee are One, and we are prisoners,
Held by our bodies in the dark apart. And Thou,
who art Thou then, and is Thy strength
Strength after all? And is our every weakness,
weak?—Such questions come from lips of
fools.

Man cannot make the day less sultry, or an hour
less long; man cannot wake the sod
And make it yield a rose. The soul of life itself
is still a mystery to all
Beyond the reach of carnate minds; yet some
men dare to doubt that Thou, Great Master
One, art God.

SUICIDES

THE river dark'ning, winds on to the bay;
The greenish swirls are gathering about the piles
That, rotting, totter in each wind that blows
Upon their oily boards. An ugly boat
Rocks up and down, and shivers in the trough
Of waves from tide and wind—a boat that waits
beside

A net to gather unimaginable forms
By day and night, that drift, not knowing, out
to sea.

Ten thousand see the light that shines within
The stars, as if some one were smiling in the
sky;

But they see not, who float on out to sea;
Love smiles and lays a baby hand upon the
breast

Of some, but they feel not the warmth, who
drift

On silently. A few may cry their name, but
they

Hear not, nor wait, but as a derelict,
Float with the tide that eddying goes out to sea.

OVER ALL

SURGING tide, and one small boat,
Waters dark, the wind's shrill note,
Strength to strength, a prayer to Fate,
Closing eyes, lips supplicate,
Circumstances grimly cold,
Hopes that keep an anchor hold,
Love to light the passageway,
Masques of Death in iron gray,
Wreckage drifts, and derelicts
On Life's sea of lost conflicts,
But God's there above it all,
To pilot us at evenfall.

RETROSPECT

Oh little rainbow-windowed chapel on the
hill,

Tell me, thy child of long ago, thy secret
will;

Is there no pen to write again the thoughts that
thrilled

Our youth? Is there no echo of the voice that
stilled

Our breaking childish hearts, or taught us lisping
prayers

To God, who understood enough of all our
cares

To give us dolls or mend a broken china cow?

Speak little rainbow-windowed chapel on the
hill,

Speak with thy cob-web belfry-bell thy secret
will.

Oh blowing Autumn orchard, wind-tossed in the
rain,

Will you and I know love and blossoms e'er
again?

Is there no way that I may feel the warmth once
more
Of vital days, dear in my memory, but lost
before
I knew their beauty, or half understood their
power—
Days that I look upon and say, "It might have
been," while hours
Are creeping stealthily between the then and
now.
Oh Autumn orchard, wind-tossed, blowing in
the rain,
Will you and I know love and blossoms e'er
again?

A LITANY

GIVE Faith to men in war!
And women strength in birth!
Return us love once more
In peace again on earth!
Touch fever-stricken eyes!
Put out the lights of sin!
Ennoble sacrifice!
Let brave hearts win!
Return to us the loss
Of love, and life, and soul!
Teach us to bear our cross
With infinite control!
Teach us to win the race
To an Eternal goal
Where all stand face to face
With one vast Over-Soul!

THE DECEIT OF IT ALL

So this is all! This is to be the end of all except
thy wrath!

Like children's bubbles blown from out a pewter
bowl

To ride the air awhile and cast their liquid jewels
on the hearth—

No more or less your love; while mine awoke my
soul.

Was it your fault? I cannot help but ask.
Did not we steal too much,

And crush the beauty that was ours in shadow
ways?

Deceit in love brings mental sluggishness where
all is in the touch,

Lest thinking deeply bring us to the better
phase

Of love where reason dominates and passion's
laid aside.

We cannot realize our love by night and be
Ashamed of it by day. So you and I, before the
whole world wide

Should have proclaimed to man our secret
unity.

For as it was, little by little, I could feel the chill
creep through

My heart as you would draw away pleading
fatigue,

Or lack of time. Sometimes you'd start in
anger at a foot-step through

The door. Your silence told me you despised
intrigue

And soon all of the little things I tried to do or
say were wrong.

One day I dropped a loved book from my
finger tips

Breaking the fine morocco. You were kind
and kept on with your song

But I could see your muscles tighten, and your
lips

Were hard before you forced a smile. Then
someone knocked, and guiltily

You held the door ajar, lying to one who came
To chat with you. I understood you, dear,
and felt the misery

Of subterfuge, and yet in spite of all, the
same

Old love made me forget all else, outweighed each
petty dissonance

And being thine within my soul I knew no other
creed

Save loving thee. What harm to other men our
disobedience?

God in his Heaven understands and knows our
need

Of being true unto the best within us.—Yet all's
said and done

And now there is this failure: not that love were
wrong

But rather that deception gnawed into our minds.

The open sun

Must shine on love to keep it sweet, and truth
must be its song.

MOODS

MAN's but a futile pawn, a crumbling fleck of
dust
That drifts from square to square, bearing the
stain of tears and rust;
To-day erases yesterday; to-morrow knows
No memory except its own. Man plays at life
and goes
Blindfolded to the end, an unseen wheel within a
wheel.

My heart is there on sandy shores where shadows
play
Across the dunes, where south winds sing
throughout the day
Of love beyond the sun. My prayers are there
in mist
That draws the salt-scent from the sea. My
soul's an Arabist
And builds its tent of dreams in far-off islands
of romance.

Dark falls across the city walls, and you are
there

Before me in the dusk. One touch, and thy love
unaware

Would come to me; hands that are cooler than
the pale moon-flower,

Touch not mine eyes where fever lights of passion
glower;

Look to the field of stars until my soul returns
thy glance.

The moment now is real. Look to the depths
and see

God moving there. Stoop not to vain regret, the
master key

To life's experience. Count nothing lost. The
best

Of men stand face to face with pain; he who can
bear the test

Of grief shall win at length. God, high in
Heaven, let us kneel!

THE LONG ROAD

THE long road desolate
Winds through the forest, and the night is still;
The cross-roads join the main
Pointing to hidden opportunity;
The long road desolate
Leads to the little stones of white behind
An open iron gate.

Where is the light? The wood
Is dark; the lanterns in the sky are out;
The rain falls through the leaves;
Weary, the flowers droop their heavy blooms;
Their fragrance turns the night
Wind's breath into an opiate beside
The long road desolate.

Where is the end, and death,
Brushing the burning dust from off my lips?
I lay my fire-dreams down,
Seeking the deep cool water's edge. Are there
No rainbow vestments for
Toilers that fall too soon beside the long
Road desolate called Life?

THE RUN

BLACK! Black! Into the black!
Our headlights flashing on!
On! On! Over the track
That stretches to the dawn!
Down! Down! Where all is still
In mists within the vale!
Up! Up! Over the hill
We trace our winding trail.
Speed! Speed! The throttle wide!
'Round curve and on the straight;
Fast! Fast! Through countryside,
City and town. Let's wait;
No! No! The road is wide—
Swerve for that aimless dog!!
Now on! Watch out! The side
Is hidden by the fog:
Plunge! Plunge! Into the dip,
The wet wind in our face;
Race! Race! A record trip!
The road is ours to trace.
There! There! The fog is gone;
The air is clear. Let's go—

The Run

Go! Go! We'll meet the dawn
Beyond the hill. Let's show
Speed! Speed! The speed that makes
A record—Mind the bridge!!
Brakes! Brakes! Jam on your brakes!
Ah—Left now to the ridge
That in the shadow lies
Beneath old Stony Hedge,
Winds! Winds! Within our eyes
My God, man! Ugh! The ledge!!!

Space! Space—Spaces that float—
No sound—No pain—No breath—
Blood—Blood—Blood in our throat—
Blackness—The fog—And death—

TOO MUCH FOR A WORD

GIVE my thy hand. There, draw thy chair
beside my bed. One last word more;
My last day's sun is setting. All is dusk. Fire-
shadows 'cross the floor
Are flickering; they tire my burning eyes and I
must close them. There,
Come close. Thou art my son, and I must say
one say, and pray one pray
With thee alone before I go; for I, no longer I,
would know
Within the vast beyond, that thou, living thy
vital life below,
Art surely owner of thy mother's last love
word.

Through all thy dealings in the world with
worldly men, just understand
Their games, their motives. Be not fooled by
sham success; throughout the land
The man who wins is he who runs the race
straightforward to the end,
Not falling to alluring, doubtful schemes. The
others who offend

The laws, may win to thy snap judgment but
mean dealings never win

The real success. Be wise; say little; feel thou
all; to damn is vain.

Come closer, darling. There. My fevered eyes
are blurred.

Above all things, be brave. Just knowing fear
is no excuse to shun

A task; count not thy life as one of such import-
ance. Never run

Away in mind or body from the dangerous.
Each time thou give

Thy life to help another, thou art once again a
man. So live

And smother all thy weaker self. See every-
thing, the right and wrong,

And understand, trying thine own strength,
dear, to know it really strong.

And should thou fail, then feel thou none the
nearer God.

And when thy heart first yearns to feel the thrill
of woman's touch, be true

Unto thy best. Stand firm, and do no mad
thing all because it's new

And seems a vital part of life. Pretending love
will desecrate

Thy heart, and cheapen all thy soul may long
to give. Then hesitate

A little lest thy happiness be marred by too
much playing. Youth

Under the open skies, laughing the long days
through will find the truth.

Be just a boy, my boy,—Thy hand—My breath
comes hard.

For love will come to thee ere long. Unthinking
thou wilt find thy one,

And thee and she wilt come into thine own.

Then play the game, my son;

Think twice of her to once of thine own self.

Give all. Take what she gives

Thee freely. Love is the most delicate of
flowers and it lives

In atmospheres where free thoughts, dear, con-
sideration, and respect

Are habits of the mind. Cherish thy least
romance. Never neglect

The little things of love. And be thou true
through all.

And then when children come to thee, give to
their youth thy youth, nor take

Their hearty foolishness as serious. Know the
new age, and make
Thyself alive to understand thy children's
pleasures and their pain.
Rule them through dignity and love; show them
thy sportsmanship and strain
Of humor—Dear, the fever draws—a waving
film before mine eyes
Makes all things dim, e'en thy dear face. Would
that my soul could sacrifice
Its peace to watch o'er thee. Kiss me. The
shadows fall

Dear God above—Watch over him and keep
him close to thee, and let him feeling
Thee, know all the best, the truth. A mother's
love on earth is done—here kneeling
Hand in hand, we pray thee—Now, all's said
and done. Come close once more. Life's
sun is low;
Love me and feel my love above thee always—
All's blackness. Now the light—I go.

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